

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JAKART 03228 140818Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-08
AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 /076 W
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R 140740Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9781
INFO AMCONSUL MEDAN
AMCONSUL SURABAYA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR,ID
SUBJECT: INDONESIAN OFFICIAL AND PRESS COMMENTARY ON ASPECTS OF
US ROLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

1. AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SUHARTO LAST WEEK RECEIVED
EXTENSIVE LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE, EMPHASIZING AMBASSADOR'S REASSURANCE
OF
CONTINUED US INTEREST IN AND AID FOR INDONESIA. TWO PAPERS, THE
RESPECTED DAILY KOMPAS AND THE MINOR MILITARY PAPER
BERITA YUDHA, PUBLISHED WEEKEND EDITORIALS ON US-INDONESIAN RELATIONS.

THE KOMPAS EDITORIAL NOTED THAT MOST OF CONCERN ABOUT US ROLE IN SEA
EMANATED FROM SINGAPORE, NOT JAKARTA, CITED VARIOUS FACTORS WHICH
ENCOURAGE CONTINUED US INTEREST IN THE REGION, AND PRESCRIBED A MORE
SYMPATHETIC US ATTITUDE ON NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES AS THE CORRECT STANCE FOR

WASHINGTON IN ITS FUTURE SEA RELATIONS. THE BERITA YUDHA EDITORIAL WAS

MUCH MORE POINTED, DISCERNING "SOME DECLINE" IN RECENT US-INDONESIAN
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RELATIONS AND SAYING THE "AMBASSADOR NEWSOM'S REASSURANCES STILL HAVE
TO BE PROVED." A KEY ELEMENT IN THE PROOF WHICH INDONESIA SEEKS,
ACCORDING TO BERITA YUDHA, "IS THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION ON ITS
PART WOULD NOT PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTRIGUES, THROUGH THE MASS
MEDIA OR OTHER CHANNELS, WHICH COULD DISTURB THE CLIMATE OF GOOD
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES."

2. PAPERS HAVE ALSO GIVEN EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO "LEAK" OF AMBASSADOR UNDERHILL'S TELEGRAM REPORTEDLY URGING CLOSING OF US BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES, SOME SEEING IT AS MORE EVIDENCE OF WANING US INTEREST IN SEA. MERDEKA, FOR EXAMPLE, THE OLD-STYLE NATIONALIST PAPER, REPORTS STORY ON FRONT PAGE UNDER HEADLINE, "SOUTHEAST ASIA NO LONGER IMPORTANT MILITARYLY OR POLITICALLY." LOCAL PAPERS HAVE APPARENTLY NOT YET PICKED UP DETAILS OF TELEGRAM, AND HAVE

THUS NOT YET RESPONDED TO AMBASSADOR UNDERHILL'S COMMENTS ON INDONESIA.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER MALIK, MEANWHILE, HAS RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO THE PRESIDENT'S RECENT COMMENTS ON THE INDIAN OCEAN. MALIK CITED THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AS A "SIGN OF NEW UNDERSTANDING ON THE PART OF THE

US GOVERNMENT TOWARD THE REGION." MALIK ALSO OPINED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S

STATEMENT "PROBABLY" MEANS THAT THE US WILL NOT PROCEED WITH ITS PLANS

FOR A MILITARY BASE ON DIEGO GARCIA. (NOTE: ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LOCAL
PRESS QUOTES MALIK AS FLATLY SAYING THE US HAS DECIDED NOT TO ESTABLISH

BASE ON DIEGO GARCIA.)

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
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Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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TAGS: PFOR, ID, XC, US
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Type: TE
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Review Markings:
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